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Healthy Diet May Help Kids Pass Tests

Children With Good Diets May Be Less Likely to Flunk Academic Tests, Study Shows

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WebMD Medical News

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March 21, 2008 -- Children who have a nutritious diet may be more likely to pass academic tests, Canadian researchers report.

Eating lots of fruits and vegetables and not eating too much fat are hallmarks of the healthy diets among the nearly 4,600 Nova Scotia kids studied by the University of Alberta's Paul Veugelers, PhD, and colleagues.

When the kids were in fifth grade, their parents completed surveys about what the children ate. Six months later, in sixth grade, the children took a standardized literacy test that included reading and writing.

Children with healthier diets were more likely to pass the test, compared to those with poorer diets.

The results held when the researchers considered other factors, including the families' income, the parents' education level and marital status, the students' gender, and whether the students lived in urban or rural areas.

The findings weren't affected by the kids' weight . What mattered was the quality of the diet, not the child's size.

Other research has stressed the importance of eating a good breakfast before school. But lunch, dinner, and snacks also count, Veugelers' team notes.

The study doesn't prove that healthy diets make for passing grades. And it's not clear if the results apply to all children. But eating healthfully has no downside.

Veugelers and colleagues published their findings in April's edition of the *Journal of School Health*.

SOURCES: Veugelers, P. *Journal of School Health*, April 2008; vol 78: pp 213-219. WebMD Medical Reference: "The Most Important Meal of the Day."

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